Salisbury University
Nabb Research Center
Since 1982
for Delmarva History and Culture
We're History...Without You!

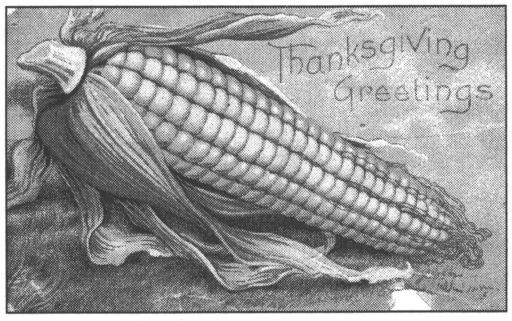
Shoreline

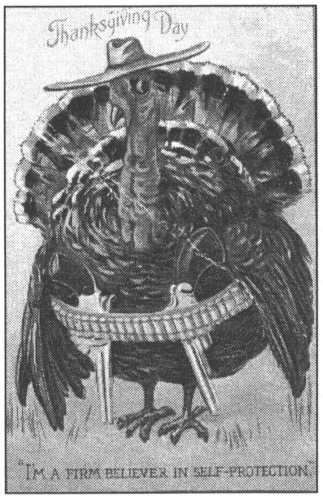
Vol. 16, Issue 11, November 2009

Halloween and Thanksgiving Traditions

As we enter the holiday season it seems appropriate to make mention of both Halloween and Thanksgiving in this issue of *Shoreline*. Halloween, in America, is an amalgamation of many cultural traditions and time periods. Folklore specialists believe the earliest Halloween was celebrated by the Druids in Britain, perhaps representing the summer's end. Later, Romans grafted onto the sometimes-grizzly Druid celebration their own harvest customs that emphasized the banishing of evil spirits. Still later, the Christian church made its own modifications to the ceremonials by honoring its own saints in a somber way. Yet even with the transformation of Halloween into a Christian holy day, the older customs clung on—with their reminiscences of ghosts, witches and goblins. From a private collection of postcards come two images linking the older macabre grinning pumpkin face with happy children, thus removing the fearsome quality attached to the ancient holiday.

In like manner, our featured Thanksgiving postcards emphasize two different attitudes of Thanksgiving—one of the most hallowed of all American holidays. First, is the stately corn image reflecting the abundance of harvest time, with its rich golden-yellow kernels reminiscent of a cornucopia spilling out an abundance of agricultural wealth. A starkly different approach to that image of Thanksgiving is a whimsical card depicting a plump turkey in cowboy garb—hat, holster and six-guns—poking fun at the turkey that decorated many Thanksgiving tables in America at the beginning of the 20th century. All of us are familiar with the famous Thanksgiving celebration at Plymouth, Massachusetts, but not as many of us recall that as early as 1619, at Berkeley Plantation on the James River in Virginia, a day of thanks was ordered with colonists holding an annual prayer service. This service came to be re-enacted each year on the first Sunday of November at Berkeley Plantation, along with 17th century amusements.





We, at the Nabb Research Center, hope you are keeping the holiday spirit alive with your own family traditions and customs. This *Shoreline* demonstrates how we are pouring out our own cornucopia of riches for you, representing Delmarva's rich history and traditions through a bountiful series of thought-provoking presentations and eye-catching exhibits.

What's New?

In December we will publish our bi-annual *Shoreline*, the long-anticipated architecture issue. Filled with articles, photographs and drawings of many of Delmarva's historic structures, both grand and humble, it is a labor of love for our staff and many of our members. Please watch for it in your holiday mail.

Because of the popularity of our bi-annual expanded *Shoreline*, the smaller, monthly edition will be undergoing a re-design beginning February 2010. It will be published less often and will have more in-depth feature articles.

Important Membership Notice

We have adjusted our annual memberships so that they expire a year after they begin (previously they expired at the end of December, regardless of when a member joined). To determine when your membership expires, please check the upper right corner of the mailing label on your *Shoreline*. Many annual memberships are due to expire at the end of December. Please help the Nabb Research Center save postage by renewing your membership early. Remember, memberships are considered tax-deductible donations!

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY
Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture
1101 Camden Avenue
Salisbury, MD 21801-6861
410-543-6312
E-mail: rcdhac@salisbury.edu

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Exhibits, Events and Notes

"At the Whim of the Waters: A Photographic Exhibit of a Disappearing Island Culture"
Through November 20
Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
(or call 410-543-6312 for an appointment)
Nabb Research Center Gallery
This exhibit of historic photographs depicts life on Smith Island, a small, remote island in the Chesapeake Bay. This event is free and open to the public.

"From Slavery to Civil Rights: Pine Street of Cambridge, Maryland" With William Jarmon and Author David 'Nicky' Henry"
Wednesday, November 4
Nabb Research Center Gallery, 7 p.m.
Moderated by local historian and author Linda Duyer, this event is free and open to the public.

Holiday Open House and Exhibit Opening
Wednesday, December 2
Nabb Research Center Reading Room and Gallery, 4-6 p.m.
Please visit us in our Reading Room to see the rich variety of historical resources available for research and learn about all that we do. Afterward, join the Nabb staff and volunteers in our new gallery space to celebrate the opening of the "An Eastern Shore Holiday: Greetings and Gifts" exhibit.

Holiday Closings

Please note that the Nabb Research Center will be closed November 25-27, December 21-January 2, and January 18.

"An Eastern Shore Holiday: Greetings and Gifts"
November 30-December 18
Monday, Wednesday, Friday;
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
(or call 410-543-6312 for an appointment)
Nabb Research Center Gallery

The wonder and splendor of Christmas are evident in this exhibit of historic toys and Christmas cards. This exhibit is free and open to the public.

"Sources of Black Community: Faith and Family"
January 16-February 28
Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 1-5 p.m.
(or call 410-543-6312 for an appointment)
Nabb Research Center Gallery
This exhibit examines family connections and the role of religious institutions among Delmarva's African Americans. Co-curated by L. Paul Morris Jr., this exhibit is free and open to the public.

"African-American Family History Workshop"
Saturday, January 23
Nabb Research Center Reading Room, 10 a.m-1 p.m.
The unique challenges of researching African-American family histories will be discussed. Share your research interests! This event is free and open to the public. Contact the Nabb Center at 410-543-6312 for reservations; seating will be limited.